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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Thursday, October 26, 1944

Subject: MORE COMFORT WITH LESS FUEL Information from engineers of the U.S.
A Department of Agriculture

Time to turn on the heat. Yes, whether the day's crisp and clear or dreary with rain, some household heating's a necessity this time of year. Notice I say some household heating.

One lesson we've learned the past 3 years is that it's possible to make a little heat go a long way. We know now that it isn't necessary to heat a whole house up like an oven for the family to be comfortable.

And I should add...to be healthy. A lot of us have enjoyed better health since we quit being so lavish with the fuel. Turns out most of us aren't the hot-house flowers we once thought we were. We thrive in cooler temperatures. Don't need such warm rooms. In fact, rooms too warm seem to be incubators for the common cold.

For the average healthy person, the room temperature doesn't need to be over 65 degrees. Of course, small children, youngsters under 4, need warmer rooms. Older people and convalescents or those with low vitality need warmer rooms too. Rooms with a temperature of not less than 70 degrees.

But most of us are comfortable in rooms of 65 degrees if we're dressed warmly. Don't have to wear bulky clothes either. Just a good warm sweater over a housedress. And maybe anklets to keep our feet warm. And a lot of us find we don't need sweaters if we're moving about. The exercise we get doing up the household chores will keep us warm in rooms heated no more than 65 degrees.

Well, as you know, fuel oil's rationed again this year. War industries still need gas and coal. Getting wood for fuel is out of the question for most of us. As a patriotic measure, we're asked to conserve fuel again this year.

And here are some suggestions from engineers of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on how you can conserve fuel without sacrificing comfort.

First of all, you can save fuel by making your home easier to heat. Check up on your house and see just where the warmth wastes take place. Drafts are the chief cause of discomfort. Just stand near a door or window that isn't tightly sealed and notice how you can feel gusts of wind coming from the outside.

Making your home easier to heat will mean sealing air leaks between the outside walls and windows and door frames. It may mean putting in storm windows and doors. And it may mean weather stripping the windows.

Unless your house is small and very compact, don't try to heat the whole house. Close off the rooms you aren't using. The bedrooms in the daytime. Close off the sun parlor. Takes an awful lot of fuel to heat a sun parlor. Turn off the radiators in the rooms you aren't using and be sure the doors leading to these rooms fit snugly. Push little rugs against the doors to keep out cold drafts.

And at night, when you raise the bedroom windows, don't cool off the whole house. Keep the bedroom doors closed. And again, keep the rugs pushed against the bottom of the door if there's room for cold air to escape there too.

When you aren't using your fireplace, you may find another leak here. A heat leak in this case. When there's no fire in the fireplace and the damper's open, the warmth of the room goes right out the chimney. Close the damper in your fireplace when you don't have a fire. Or if the fireplace has no damper, close the fireplace when it's not in use. A tight-fitting wooden or plywood screen will mean a saving in fuel.

And here's another tip. Sometimes a room of 68 degrees will seem cold, while another one as low as 65 seems comfortable. Reason for this may be the humidity of the room. It may seem cold because there isn't enough moisture in the air. You can remedy this by keeping a pan of water on your radiators or near them.

You can save heat by using heavier draperies at the windows. Lowering shades all the way or closing the blinds at night will keep a room warmer especially when the wind is high.

You can save fuel by keeping your hot water tank adjusted to just the right temperature for washing and bathing. On laundry days, when you need more hot water, you'll turn the flame higher, of course. Plan to concentrate on the tasks that require hotter water in those hours.

Yes, we can be comfortable with less fuel. It just takes a little planning ahead. And saving fuel is the patriotic thing to do. It's the wise and thrifty thing to do too.

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